

Notes and Observations

DECORATIVE ART IN BUTTERFLIES. — With reference to B. O. C. Gardiner's note under this heading (1978, *Ent. Rec.*, 90: 249-250), a good many years ago, I think it was in a book on the butterflies of Ceylon but cannot now trace the reference, this single, or direct, transfer method was described but it was noted that when colours were due to structure the results were not satisfactory, because, for want of a better term, the scales were then back to front. A double transfer method was described. This consisted, briefly, of making the initial transfer onto a wax-covered, not gummed, paper. This was then gummed to a second paper, and then, after drying completely under pressure, the two papers were transferred to a bath of suitable wax solvent, and the original waxed paper was peeled off, leaving the scales, now in their proper order, attached to the second paper. This, at least, was the theory. — D. G. SEVASTOPULO, F.R.E.S.

SCALE TRANSFERS OF LEPIDOPTERA. — Mr. B. O. C. Gardiner's recent note (90: 249-50) contrasted the current commercial practice of severing the wings of Lepidoptera and using them in various forms of so-called 'decorative art' (a traffic which has, in fact, been frequent since the Victorian era) with the methods of actual scale transfer with gum arabic explained by George Edwards in his *Essays upon natural history, and other miscellaneous subjects* (London, 1770).

I share Mr. Gardiner's enthusiasm, for I first became interested in various methods of scale transfer (part of the larger and very complex history of 'nature printing', which has been chiefly botanical) upon reading the reprint of Edwards' same account, included in Patrick Matthews' delightful anthology *The pursuit of moths and butterflies* (London, 1957), and by purchase in the following year of a copy of the classic example of lepidopterous scale transfer, Sherman Foote Denton's *Moths and butterflies of the United States east of the Rocky Mountains* (Boston, [1897-] 1900). Denton's work, published in eight fascicles, was illustrated by black and white figures and embellished by many plates of actual scale transfers from specimens. (I have only recently initiated a full bibliographical study of this curious book, and an example in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., apparently Denton's personal copy according to the stamp on the spine, is 'extra-illustrated' by very numerous tipped-in plates of additional scale transfers with manuscript identifications).

Denton explained in his book that he was required to make over 50,000 scale transfers to provide suitable plates for the edition of 500 copies, and the difficulty of the method leaves little doubt that his estimate, incredible as it seems, was probably correct. The bodies were printed from engravings and then hand-coloured. Denton's book is one of the most remarkable examples of 'nature printing' and, of course, it